

Submitter: Heidi Gaither

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

Co-Chair Campos, Co-Chair Valderrama, and members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 5526.

My name is Heidi Gaither and I am the Intellectual and Developmental Disability (I/DD) Program Manager at Klamath County Developmental Disabilities Services, which serves as Klamath County's Community Developmental Disabilities Program (CDDP). One of the primary responsibilities of my organization is to provide case management services to individuals who experience an Intellectual and/or a Developmental Disability.

Case managers for an individual with an I/DD are a lifeline - they help connect people to vital services like housing, healthcare, and transportation. And in the event of an emergency, case managers ensure individuals are able to evacuate and find a safe place to go.

The programs that CDDP's offer are funded through the Oregon Department of Human Services. Over the past few years, our funding level has remained flat at roughly 86% of what would be considered full funding. This percentage is historically less than what APD has received. It would be beneficial for us to reach the same levels of funding that their division has been appropriated. Unfortunately, our underfunding has led to reactive hiring at the start of each new biennium, when FTE is allotted from ODHS, rather than offering the ability for programs like ours to be proactive in hiring more staff to support all of the new individuals who are made eligible for services. In Klamath County, our program continues to see rapid growth year over year in those being deemed eligible for services. For example, in 2018, our CDDP supported 255 people. Jump to April of 2025, and our program is supporting more than 700 children and adults who experience I/DD in our community. This significant increase in individuals served has led to heavy workloads across our entire department. An investment to fully fund CDDP's would bolster our ability to hire and retain qualified staff, ensuring that individuals who experience I/DD receive the personalized support they need to live the best lives that they choose.

We, as CDDP's, are partnering with the Brokerages this session to restore these programs to 100% of full funding. Such investment would draw down significant federal match and will help solve many of the staffing issues that our programs are experiencing across the state.

We urge you to support this request!

Sincerely,

Heidi Gaither